

Interview with **JOSE GUTIERREZ**
Interviewed by Richard Maulsby

Jose Gutierrez had 30 years of public service in the District of Columbia and federal governments. He served in several positions in Mayor Barry's cabinet, including Director of Human Resources, Chief Procurement Officer and Director of Administrative Services. He retired from federal service in 2006 and advises non-profit organizations on real estate developments.

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Interview begins

JOSE GUTIERREZ: My name is Jose Gutierrez. The last name is spelled G-u-t-i-e-r-r-e-z, and Jose is J-o-s-e. And I was a member of the Barry campaign group and a member of his Cabinet.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let's start back a little bit before that. Tell us a little bit about your background, where you were born and raised, what school, how it was you came to Washington, D.C.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, I was born in New York City. I went to schools in New York. I went to Catholic schools from pre-kindergarten pretty much throughout high school. And I was a student at Columbia University, part of the Puerto Rican Student Union back in the early '70s, and I used to travel in and out of D.C. primarily on student-related, youth-related activities, political activities. We were all during that era very much involved in civil rights and very much involved in looking to change the way America dealt with black and brown people in this country. So while I was involved in that stuff, dealing on the Latino side of the equation, Ivanhoe Donaldson was in New York very much involved with the African American civil rights struggle early on as a student. He had gone to Michigan, undergrad, and had basically become very much involved with SNCC and was very active in that and was one of the top organizers, not only in the SNCC movement, but in terms of sharing experiences and talent and techniques with a group of us that were involved with community action, demonstrations—

INTERVIEWER: What period of time is this?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: We're talking about the '70s. In New York at the time, in the Puerto Rican community, we had a number of groups involved in that struggle early on. I guess at the heart of it was a group called the Real Great Society, RGS, and RGS was made up of former gang leaders or gang members who saw community action as a way of changing a lot of the Puerto Rican community, not only New York, but Chicago, and throughout the Northeast. From that group came the beginning seeds of the creation of a thing called the Young Lords Party in New York, and from the movement of that relationship, many of us who were in college began to set

up Puerto Rican student unions. And so at Columbia University, I was involved with the Puerto Rican student union setup, and we participated in mass demonstrations throughout New York and held some major student conferences at Columbia University. Columbia University was an interesting place to be at that time because it was also the—on the other side, you had the student activities, the general student activities, that were going on, student demonstrations, the closing of the campus, the push for reform in the way Columbia University dealt with the general community. At that time, Columbia University was growing and expanding in Morningside Heights. It was taking over tenanted buildings and converting them to dormitories. So there was a lot of attention between the University and the local community, and it was an interesting time to have come of age, if you will, in New York, and to have been part of that college movement.

INTERVIEWER: When did you move to Washington, D.C., and why did you move to D.C.?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, as I said, Ivanhoe Donaldson and I had come to know each other, we had become friends. Through him, I had met some interesting people who later became major players in D.C. government. John Wilson was at the time with the National Sharecroppers Fund. We're talking about 1973, '72-'73 timeline. And John Wilson was involved with the Democratic Party. We were all pretty much involved with the Democratic Party and Democratic Party politics. And the big issue in the District of Columbia was you had a local community made up of African American, Latino, you know, the support structure, if you will, in neighborhoods like Ward 1 and, you know, Ward 8 that provided the labor force, if you will, for the Nation's capital. So D.C. has always had like two separate faces, you know, the face of the Nation, the national seat of government, which also brings about tourism, and then the workers, who lived in these communities that were suffering from massive unemployment, you know, poor housing, lack of education, incentives, inability to kind of find a job if you were going to school, to raise the money to go back to school to kind of buy your clothes or school supplies. So during that time, you had people like Ivanhoe and John Wilson and another great player in this town, a great mind, Jim Gibson, who later becomes the head of Planning. He was at Potomac Institute.

So the big issue that came to the table was the home rule initiative, and John Wilson was putting together the home rule initiative campaign, the referendum campaign, and was looking for people who had basically had experience in organizing, had experience in community outreach, to kind of put together the team that would bring about a successful adoption by the community of the Home Rule Act. So he had put together a team, I became a member of that team, and from SNCC, we had Reggie Robinson, who was a phenomenal organizer. I was there and there was a young lady from Ward 3, I'm blocking her name, I can't recall her name right now, but she was very active in Ward 3 community in politics.

So I basically, in 1970—I want to say '73. I think the—

INTERVIEWER: Home rule, we started home rule in '74, that was the first Council, so—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right, the first Council in '74, but the referendum had to be passed before the elections were held.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So a year—so the referendum and home rule referendum I think was held around 1973. So that's how I got into town. You know, my notion was I'll come in, do that, and then I'll go back to New York and finish my undergrad. You know, so it was the year, the hiatus year, if you will, of my college career. Well, then, you know, I never went back. I finished my undergraduate here at Antioch, because you get involved in the local community, and, frankly, I just fell in love with this town. It was a wonderful experience. I lived up on Columbia Road. At the time, Columbia Road was heavy Latino, but it was cosmopolitan. You had the influx of the white community, who was liberal, more cosmopolitan. So it was a unique—in many ways, that ward, Ward 1, reminded me of Greenwich Village in New York. So it was easy for me to kind of just become part of that community. And, as I said, Ivanhoe and John Wilson were buddies, and through them, I met Jim Gibson. And then as part of that mix, I met Marion Barry, and we were all young and began to hang out.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you meet him? What were the circumstances?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: During the referendum, he was very active and involved in working with us and John Wilson in pushing that referendum forward. He was at the—he was elected to the School Board. I think the School Board was the only mechanism in town that basically had an electoral process.

INTERVIEWER: That and the non-voting delegate.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right, and the non-voting delegate. And he was over at Pride as Executive Director, and his wife, Mary Treadwell, was over there. And another person I met who was very much involved with that was Carroll Harvey, Carroll Boston Harvey is what we used to call him. But Carroll Harvey later becomes also a member of the administration on the first term in 1978. Carroll is actually I think living now in Virginia, in Christianville [*sic*], out in the country somewhere. But interesting guy, a fascinating guy, an engineer, a very talented man. So—

INTERVIEWER: What was your first impression of Marion Barry when you met him?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I thought—I thought he was—

INTERVIEWER: Had you heard of him before?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, because basically my involvement was more in New York based, so, you know, my dealings were really Ivanhoe, who was in and out of New York, and you had Ron Brown, who was a young man at the time, in New York. I think he was working for the National Urban League. So when I came to this town, Marion to me was just, you know, more the local guy. Ivanhoe told me, hey, he was part of—he was former chair of SNCC and very much involved in the civil rights thing. And we just hit it off, Marion and I just hit it off, as friends. You know, we were not—you know, none of us had titles at the time, you know. This is the—I mean, he was on the School Board, but basically all—this was in the 1974 timeline, it was before the elections to the City Council. So it was just a group of community activists who shared a common philosophy, a progressive philosophy, about what was needed in this country to make it better for all of us, and on that basis, we would sit around and kind of talk politics and talk about strategy and talk about what we were doing and then just, you know, it was a bunch of guys having a few too many glasses of wine and—

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Just guys?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, pretty much. I mean, early on, it was just a bunch of guys. You know, then, of course, you begin to split into whatever your relationships were, but, yeah, it was just hanging out. Marion was married to Mary Treadwell, so he had to kind of like say, "Well, you know, I'm going to meet with the guys and talk whatever, you know, home rule."

[Laughter.]

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The home rule referendum became the excuse for whoever was married.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Did you work in Marion's 1974 campaign for City Council? Did you work on that?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no. Interesting enough, what happened, after the referendum gets adopted, well, you know, Marion is going to run for Council. John Wilson is running for Ward 2. I get involved in trying to put together a campaign for the first Latino to go into the Council, a gentleman by the name of Carlos Rosario, who had been the Director of the Office of Latino Affairs, or the Office of Spanish-Speaking Affairs, under Walter Washington, and had been very much involved in setting up in Ward 1 immigrant assistance programs, whether it be programs of English instruction or, you know, daycare, or a program dealing with the elderly, the Latino elderly. So all of us began to kind of splinter into working on other kinds of initiatives. So I was not involved in his campaign in '74. He then runs again, and in that campaign, I believe he was—I think in '74, he was running against—

INTERVIEWER: Well, there were a lot of—it was the at-large, so they were—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right, right. He was running at-large.

INTERVIEWER: Del Lewis ran in that.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Del Lewis ran and Doug Moore.

INTERVIEWER: Doug Moore, who, of course, was elected.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: And Doug Moore was elected.

INTERVIEWER: And Julius Hobson.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: And Julius Hobson, which, by the way, fascinating man, wonderful man. But Ivanhoe, being the strategist, was always the one who kind of did the after-action analysis. You know, he was into the polling, he was into—you know, let's spread out the wards, let's look it down to the precincts. He was a surgeon when it came to politics, and he would examine what would happen if this person had not been—if Julius Hobson had not been in the race and pulled the amount of votes that he had pulled, would someone like Marion been able to beat Doug Moore? Because I think the spread there, if I remember, the difference—I'm talking about the primary election—was under 200 votes. It was a very small number. And, you know, what were the lessons learned? Ivanhoe was always about let's figure out what we did right and let's figure out what we did wrong, and how do you do it right? Ivanhoe used to have these little offices with—what I remember, he used to have all these little charts on the wall and all these little maps of D.C. and wards and precincts and, you know, kind of like all this geography stuff going on. But—

INTERVIEWER: To go back to—so, but in the '74 campaign, you were working for Mr. Rosario?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I was working on trying to elect Carlos Rosario in Ward 1.

INTERVIEWER: Ward 1. Okay.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah. And he loses. We lose badly. Our campaign headquarters was on the corner of—it's now a restaurant. It's now—right across the street from the restaurant Mint wood Place]. Up from where Starbucks is now, there is that restaurant that has like—that's two floor, they have a restaurant on the top that has kind of like a patio on the top of the building.

INTERVIEWER: Mmm. Oh, I know.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You know the building?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So that was our headquarters. And we had that big sign, "Carlos Rosario Ward 1 Elect." But, you know, we just didn't have enough—we couldn't put together a coalition that would turn it around, that would basically get—he had some name recognition, but not widespread name recognition in that ward, so we lost.

INTERVIEWER: And so moving forward now, when did you become involved in the 1978 campaign? What is your recollection about how that all came down, how that developed? When did you first have a conversation with Marion about the campaign, for example? When did you first know he was going to run for Mayor?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The campaign does not really begin in '78. The campaign began when Marion was on the Council right after the Hanafi Muslim incident that occurred in the City Council where Marion was shot. At that point, Ivanhoe felt that he had—that Marion had achieved sufficient name recognition citywide that we should begin to kind of strategize about putting together a campaign. So there are a number of meetings, different groups, that Ivanhoe would organize throughout to kind of figure out whether or not he was right on the pulse on who would be willing to kind of participate not only in the campaign, as staff, but volunteers and the fundraising. As I said, Ivanhoe was always about the whole recipe of the process.

So Marion was the candidate, the face, the salesman, the image, the motivator, in a sense, right? He was the person that everybody felt, yeah, this guy has got what it takes to lead this football team, if you will. But in terms of laying out the game plan, the details of the game plan, how you move the ball forward, Ivanhoe was doing that.

So throughout that period, there were a number of discussions that I participated in. Some of them were held at the Potomac Institute, which was the entity that Jim Gibson worked at as a planning guy and who also had a project called Technical Assistance to Black Mayors. Remember, during this period, you had the first election of black mayors. You had Stokes, you had Dick Hatcher in Gary, Indiana. So it was a time of massive political change in the country and the beginnings of minorities, African Americans and others, to being elected to office. So, and that was useful because then you began to deal with issues of policy and initiatives and campaign themes, and we began to kind of get a sense of Marion's own philosophy and ideas, and that began to kind of set the game boat, the game plan.

INTERVIEWER: Was Marion always at those meetings?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, not always. No, not always.

INTERVIEWER: Who was there? How many people?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: It fluctuated, but normally at Potomac you would probably have, you know, maybe 8, 10 people. You had all the folks that kind of dealt with Marion. You had Carroll Harvey, Jim Gibson, Del Lewis, myself, you know, Wilson. You know, you had a number of people coming in and saying, you know, "Well, should we look at this? What about Ward 3? How are we going to deal with that?" And Ward 4, which was the hub of the African American middle class, how are you going to deal with that goal post? You know, Marion is an interesting—Marion was an interesting guy. I still talk about him as though he was around, but an interesting character because in a sense people underestimated him. You know, the fact is the man almost had a doctorate, and he came up through the academic side on the hard science, you know, so he didn't do the degree in art. You know what I mean? He actually went the chemistry route, which for any of us who were dealing with biology, chemistry, statistics, you know, I mean, we could easily recognize how taxing those subjects are. But he was underestimated because he had that, you know—he would split that—you know, his speaking style was—

INTERVIEWER: Oh, the urban dialect.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right, exactly. Right, right. Well, you get a bit of Mississippi. Right.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: So, but again, this core group that was meeting, many of them were SNCC veterans.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: A lot were SNCC veterans. A lot—I would say a lot of them just—yeah, SNCC and slash student, minority student, Movement veterans, civil rights veterans, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And these meetings started about when? In '76? 77?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: As I said, right—I think it was like right—Marion was still in the hospital recovering from—[March 9–11, 1977]

INTERVIEWER: The wound, the gunshot wounds, yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: From the gunshot wound.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So whatever that timeline was.

INTERVIEWER: Where was the Potomac Institute located physically?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: It was on P and I think it's 18th Street. It's now an embassy.

INTERVIEWER: How was it funded?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The Potomac Institute received foundation money. I don't recall exactly the name of the foundation. But Jim Gibson is still around.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: He lives I think up in Van Ness somewhere, but he could fill in the details of how it was funded and all that stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Again, were there any women in these meetings?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You know, early on, we were—the answer to your question is yes. Towards as we got closer to the campaign, there were, but early on, we were—you know, the times—during that period of time, there were not—you know, it was still a male-dominated kind of mindset, so although there were women in SNCC, you know, who participated in SNCC, a bunch of them, you know—at those early meetings they were not. Courtland Cox, by the way, was another one that was very active.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Well, you know, that's interesting I think about because that's the same is true with what is now called the GLBT community, but I still call it the gay community, but in fact it was a male-dominated movement in the 1970s—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right, yeah. It's just a reality of the times, right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Certainly not the case in the campaign—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, no.

INTERVIEWER: —and we had a sense of that obviously.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, no. The campaign became a call to those in the community, both male and female, who wanted D.C. to be a better D.C. I mean, D.C. was managed by the Federal Government. It was the President who said, "Sterling Tucker, you're going to be chairman. And, Walter Washington, you're going to be Mayor," and, you know, "Joe Blow, you're going to run the department of whatever." So it was called District government, but it was really nothing more than a Federal agency, and many of us felt it was an occupation army

because many of the employees of D.C. government didn't live in D.C. You know, they lived out in the suburbs somewhere. They would come in, work these jobs, and then they would leave. They would never think about actually visiting Ward 8 or—you know, you're not going to find a D.C. government official back then up on Columbia Road, so—

INTERVIEWER: Right. So what did you do during the 1978 campaign? What was your role in that campaign?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: During the '78 campaign, my role was mostly dealing with the Latino community, pulling votes there. Sonia, my then wife, Sonia Gutierrez, Pedro Lujan—who else? Carlos Rosario. I mean, there was a group of folks who put together Latinos for Barry and were actually looking to pull into the campaign a target number of—deliver 1,000 votes during the primary. So it was all about—again, getting back to Ivanhoe Donaldson, it was all about formula. That campaign, which is basically 4 years after home rule, is still about pulling numbers because the numbers being pulled on the elections were small numbers, meaning that the electorate voting was spread over a wide field, so you were looking for percentage of that vote to go to your candidate and looking for a spread where you beat the second runner, looking for about 2,000, 3,000 votes, according to Donaldson's analysis, which, by the way, he was not far off because I think Marion Barry wins the primary by maybe about 1,500, 1,600 votes.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So the doctor was not far off, as they say.

[Laughter.]

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You know, so we all had these target assignments. So I had mine. The campaign staff generally had their goals. Community groups—it was all about a rainbow, it was all coalition based. And, you know, under the strategy, when you put it all together, it produces the numbers that you need in the primary to try to beat out what we thought was the person that we needed to focus on, which was Sterling Tucker. So—

INTERVIEWER: Did the Sterling Tucker campaign, to your knowledge—and you mentioned Mr. Rosario, who worked in the Walter Washington campaign—did they have outreach to the Latino community?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: They felt entitled. They felt, you know, "We are the establishment, we are the ones that have been designated by the President under the pre-home rule to supervise this farm, and, therefore, why wouldn't you vote for us, since we are the ones with the experience? We know what we're doing. We understand what's needed."

INTERVIEWER: It's our turn.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah. You know, it's, "We own this thing. I mean, why wouldn't you just sign on the dotted line?"

INTERVIEWER: So you did a voter registration campaign?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: We did voter registration.

INTERVIEWER: And how did you do it? Do you know?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, we met—there was an interesting guy, I'm trying to remember his name, but he ran—I can see his face—but he ran the D.C. Board of Elections, great guy, a lawyer, African American.

INTERVIEWER: Horton?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, Eleanor Horton.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, no, no, not Eleanor—

INTERVIEWER: No, but her husband, her husband.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Right?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, no.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't it?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I'm not sure about that. It was—I forget the guy's name, but very nice guy and very willing to kind of—and interested in expanding voter registration. So we did the whole thing. I mean, we tried to bring people to register. Remember, back then there was no idea of easy registration. There was no—it was early in the— {Norval E. Perkins} was chief officer/ Executive Director of the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics.

INTERVIEWER: You did not have postcard registration in—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I don't believe so. I don't think we had postcard registration, you know, I think—

INTERVIEWER: How did you register people?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: We actually took people down to the Board of Elections and got them registered. I remember we did a lot of organizing like that. There were a significant number of people in this—Latinos in this town who had been registered as Democrats, participated in national politics, so we took advantage of that. A lot of the immigrants who could register, who had become citizens, we had to kind of figure out a way how to bring them to get registered.

INTERVIEWER: Was your target primarily Ward 1?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah, the target was primarily Ward 1 and a portion of Ward 4 because the precincts in which the Latino community lived really crossed those two wards. I believe it's still that way today, I mean, although more and more of those communities have moved into Ward 4, and you don't see as many now in the hub of Columbia Road and 18th Street, you know, the Adams Morgan, Mount Pleasant area anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Did Marion Barry carry those precincts?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yes, yes. He did very well. He did very well. I mean, we—Marion was always outreaching to the Latino community. He had participated in the Latino festival and—

INTERVIEWER: Adams Morgan Day?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: In the Adams Morgan Days. And, you know, he was a people person. He was, you know, also a night owl. So he was out there. You know, he was always—

INTERVIEWER: Working on home rule.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah, working on home rule, exactly.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: So did you work full-time in the campaign?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No. No, because I was a—

INTERVIEWER: What were you doing at this time?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, in 1976, I became a Federal employee.

INTERVIEWER: Ah. At?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: At the Bureau of the Census.

INTERVIEWER: Department of Commerce then.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Department of Commerce, right. I just happened to have the three courses, 9 credit hours, in statistics, so—

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: And how long did you work—what was your—what kind of work did you actually do? Analysis?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: What I did was human resources. I was involved in the studies that measured knowledge, skill, and ability, which are the baselines for determining classification and pay.

INTERVIEWER: Ah. Mm-hmm.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So it was all part of that.

INTERVIEWER: So that was your day job. And then—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: That was my day job. At night, I was in—so not to violate—

INTERVIEWER: You were working on home rule.

[Laughter.]

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I was working on home rule. Like you know who was, you know, over—there were a couple of people who were so-called "Hatched," so we were all—

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah, that's right. I forgot about that.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah. So that we were all kind of, you know, walking this fine line of it's not me, it's my wife, Sonia Gutierrez, who is actually running the—or dealing with—you know, I'm an adviser, I'm, you know—

INTERVIEWER: Just explain what the Hatch Act is, so somebody 100 years from now who is listening to this—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah, yeah. The Hatch Act is a Federal statute that has this prohibition of who can participate in the Federal employee prohibitions in terms of participating directly in campaign activities of a partisan nature. So you can participate if it's nonpartisan, such as referendums, but you cannot be party affiliated, participate in any party-affiliated functions. The District government, because it was considered a Federal agency, had this flow-down, so in effect the Hatch Act applies to D.C. government, but I was a Federal employee, so it applied to me, and I sought to make sure that I did not cross that line. So I was not a member of the campaign staff, I was not involved in the phone banks, I was in it—I was sharing ideas with friends about what I thought could and could not happen. See: The Hatch Act of 1939.

INTERVIEWER: Were there Latinos who worked in the campaign as volunteers? Was there an organized effort?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yes, yes. The Latinos for Barry were in effect the volunteer arm of the Barry campaign, and they received guidance from the campaign in terms of—and support in many ways—in terms of what could be done, where it could be done, and that kind of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Were you officially like the coordinator for the Latino community—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no, because remember I was—

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a title?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, I had no title because I was "Hatched."

INTERVIEWER: Oh, because you were—yeah, of course. I'm sorry.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So I was just a husband to a wife who was—

INTERVIEWER: —working on home rule.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: And who was working on home rule.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Okay. At what point in that campaign did you think, hey, Marion is going to win this? Did you ever think that?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I always thought that.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: It's all part of the drive of an organizer. You always believe you're going to win, there is no defeat, it's all about your will to succeed. So you never walk into a fight thinking you're going to lose. So you walk into any event thinking that you've got the upper hand, you know what you're doing, you've got a game plan, you're going to win. And it was all about following the game plan. So if you stick to the game plan, you're going to win, and that's the mindset of the organizer in me, and that's the mindset of the organizer in Ivanhoe Donaldson and any member of SNCC. You know, it's all about, "We can do this."

INTERVIEWER: Well, that sort of anticipated what my next question was going to be. I mean, that aside, that philosophical approach, but in any campaign, there are external factors you can't control. Why do you think, looking back on it, why do you think Marion Barry did prevail in that primary campaign?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: A couple of factors. One, a significant factor obviously was the endorsement of the *Washington Post*, but in terms of community politics, he was the change agent. He was the one that was going to bring D.C. government services to the people. He was going to make sure that DMV worked, that the Sanitation Department picked up the garbage, which was a major problem back in those days. You know, that we were going to get access to opportunities in government, a government that was a local government that was basically a suburban-occupied, staffed, government. So, I mean, what's the sense of having a local government if you, who live in the area that it's supposed to be served by that government can't even get a job there—right?—because they're all taken by—you know. The police department was primarily white, the fire department was primarily white, the Sanitation Department, you know, permits, deeds, you go down the row and you pick an agency, and it was like, you know—

INTERVIEWER: Well, and oftentimes people in those positions were there because of Members of Congress who—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Exactly, exactly, because there were few agencies under D.C. government that were classified under the Civil Service as career agencies. Employment Services, which is where Matt Chadad [ph] went, which was the place where the Summer Youth Program was anchored, was one of those agencies, and that's part of the reason why we had the pushback that we did early on, on the Summer Youth Program during the first few years of the administration because their mindset was, "We're part of the Federal Government, and who are you people coming in here and telling us we have to change our mindset and actually give summer jobs to these? Who are these people?" You know? So—

INTERVIEWER: Change agent factor is sort of a thematic kind of thing, but are there specific issues that you think broke in Marion's favor, looking back on it?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Oh, yeah. The whole issue of jobs, the issue of clean streets, summer youth, were key factors, and his ability to kind of bring about a coalition and bring about life into a campaign. I mean, to many of us, when you look at—you know, not to cast aspersions on anyone, but when you looked at these campaigns run by the other candidates in the race, they were kind of like, you know, senior citizen, cocktail, you know, events. I say that now as a senior citizen, right?

[Laughter.]

JOSE GUTIERREZ: But back then, as a young person, you kind of looked at it and you say, you know, oh, you know. Right? The mindset of Mom and Dad are watching you in the living room and you can't make noise. You know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: Right. Yeah. What did you do on election day?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Election day, I—again, being careful not to violate the Hatch Act—

INTERVIEWER: You reported to your duty station.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: —I reported to my duty station and was busy on the phone keeping up with what the Latinos for Barry were doing.

INTERVIEWER: By the way, who was your key person that you were on the phone with?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: All the time?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Other than my wife, who was very much involved in it, well, you know, people like Carlos Rosario, people like, you know, Harry—I mean, there were a bunch of people that—there's a Rolodex of people that you kind of—that I would call. Rolodex is—

INTERVIEWER: What's a Rolodex? Right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: What's a Rolodex?

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Explain to people in 2150 what a Rolodex is.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: That would be the equivalent of what you have on your iPhone address list.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: But back in the day, we were all paper based, so we had this little wheel thing that kind of had index cards that had all the names of your contacts.

INTERVIEWER: And being a government agency, they still had the dial?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The rotary dial.

INTERVIEWER: The rotary dial.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The famous rotary dial that you could—if you didn't want to scratch your finger, you had to use the eraser end of a pencil, of a number 2 pencil, to kind of help you with the dial.

INTERVIEWER: So did you vote before you went to work or—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Oh, I voted early.

INTERVIEWER: Early? And—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I would have voted often, but it was—

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: So, okay. Election night. What were you doing election night?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Election night, we were all gathered around. I think—what was that?

INTERVIEWER: Harambee House.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Harambee House, yeah. And, you know, just waiting for this number to go in, and sweating it out, because the thing was so tight early on. I mean, so you kind of—and then you began to see this little spread, and then the magic number comes in, and we're like I think 1,560 or 1,570 over, and we win the primary.

INTERVIEWER: Were you in Marion's suite that night at the Harambee House or—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, because the following day, we had discussions about putting together the beginnings of—you didn't want to be presumptive about winning the general election—

INTERVIEWER: Right, right, right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: —but you also had to recognize that you needed to begin to plan out the first 100 days of the administration.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Was this the first campaign that really you had been involved in? I know you had done work for Rosario, but was this—in terms of—I guess what I want to get at, in terms of an experience for you—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: As a young person, the first campaign other than student-related demonstrations and, you know, pickets and that kind of thing, yeah, the first formal participation in the election of a candidate as opposed to a referendum. Right? Because a referendum was all about an idea being approved. This was a first, "Vote for this individual, who will implement a series of ideas that will make this town a better place for you to live in." So Marion Barry reflected that and became the candidate, and got elected, won the primary, and we were very confident that he would win the general election. This town is primarily, as Donaldson would often point out, a town that's majority Democratic Party participants, so if you win the primary in the Democratic Party, chances are, unless you do something wild and crazy, that you're going to win the general election.

INTERVIEWER: Did the Latino community, in your view, produce for Marion as you had anticipated? Did you meet your goals as far as—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yes, I felt strongly that we had. I think we hit the number. You know, we may have been a little under, but when you look at the spread of his primary victory, 1,560, you can say there were a lot of contributing pieces to it. So you look at the rainbow, it was Latino, it was African American, it was the white liberal community, it was the gay community. So all of these factors came together, all of these groups, if you will, that had been locked out, came together as a force for the first time, and proved that you can win an election, and I think that that was significant, significant to Latinos, as it was to the gay community, as it was to the black community, in a very real way because you began to see that, hey, my vote does count, you know, we can affect this thing.

INTERVIEWER: Looking back on it years later now, what do you see the significance of the 1978 Barry campaign?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: The significance, in my view, was that it was the first time that you had an opportunity to kind of bring young talent from a variety of places, and women, gays, African American, Latinos, talented individuals who would come into government and put together a government that worked. The first Barry administration was, in my view, one of excellence. I don't think—I mean, I don't think anyone would dispute that. We were hard charging, we put in the hours, we implemented policies that made sense. Some may disagree with some of the policies. I mean, obviously, you know, there are differences on the point of view in terms of the

human resources issue, where we made significant changes. We took over from the Civil Service Commission the responsibility for the police test, the fire test. We changed the promotional component, upped the ranks of both departments to consider more than just the written test and give other factors a weight, particularly the ranks of sergeant and above, so that you could begin to have a department or departments dealing with police and fire that were more reflective of the community. Marion's push opened up those departments to the participation of women. There were not a lot of women in the police and fire department before Marion Barry became the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

You can disagree with some of the philosophy that was the underpinnings of the minorities set-aside contracting program. You know, I took over that function after I did personnel, I became the Director, working with Courtland Cox, who was on the Commission side of the certification of minority firms. And keep in mind that at that time, the active case law was fully involved, so you did have a disadvantaged business enterprise program. And that gets overturned years later by *Croson v. Virginia*, which basically said you can't do it that way anymore, you've got to basically create this other thing called a small business preference program, you know, and that's what we have now in D.C., I think.

So you can disagree that, hey, you know, maybe we went too far, maybe there were some hiccups, but anytime you have change, there's going to be hiccups, and anytime you have change, there are going to be those that try to push that envelope too far. I was always a lot more cautious for a number of reasons, not the least of which was I wanted these things to survive, and if you push the envelope too far, if you walk that edge too far, you run the risk of, you know, falling over the edge or creating so much opposition that you kind of basically defeat what you're trying to do. So—but overall, in my view, the first Barry administration was an outstanding group of professionals who came together under his leadership and his support.

INTERVIEWER: And, by the way, what was your role in the first Barry administration?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, when I first came in—

INTERVIEWER: And when did you first come in?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: I came in day one.

INTERVIEWER: Day one. Okay. January 7.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Yeah, well, exactly. I was in the building before Marion completed his swearing in, and Donaldson, basically, you know, the packages of paperwork were ready for signature. Donaldson, general assistant. I had a number of—I think my first personnel action in D.C. government was a special assistant, and then I—and that lasted for like 2 days, because then I was the Deputy over with Carroll Harvey, who was the Assistant City Administrator for

Operations, and that lasted for less than a month because basically my role was to put together the analysis of the steps required to implement the D.C. Personnel Act and the components of the Act and the critical path to success, if you will. And, you know, back then we used to do these—some of us anyway, who were involved in policy wonk-ish kind of things. We would do, you know, PER charts, Program Evaluation Review technique charts, which was a system that was widely used back in those days as to kind of figure out what you needed to do. And then, I mean, within the first—like I said within the—I think it was within the first 60 days of the administration, I was Acting Director of Personnel, and then later became the Director of Personnel, and led the initiative that implemented the Personnel Act in D.C.

After that, I also participated in a number of task forces and et cetera, but after that, my next major assignment was procurement, the head of the Department of Administrative Services, and dealing with procurement matters and acquisition of goods, services, and that kind of thing.

INTERVIEWER: When you think of Marion Barry today—I mean, obviously people have an image of Marion Barry, but you obviously knew and worked for him in a different way than a lot of people did—at the end of the day, how do you sum up Marion Barry?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, Marion Barry and I, although we had moments of disagreement and some tension moments in our relationship, always remained friends. There may have been others around him who viewed me and him in a different kind of way, but the phone call between him and I was always going on, I mean, you know, even when we were in effect fighting, we were talking. You know what I mean? So he was a friend. He was a brilliant man. And like many of us, like all of us, I think, we all have demons, so he had his, but you can't—you've got to weigh whatever his were within the content of his overall career, and if you view it that way, Marion Barry helped establish firmly that D.C. government should be a local government run by local politicians as opposed to some kind of an arm of the White House.

So it's to his credit that we have been successful these, I don't know, what, how many years for home rule? '74, '84, '94, 2004, 2014—40-plus years.

INTERVIEWER: 40-plus years.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Of which he was a major player for almost what? 30, 35 of those.

INTERVIEWER: Arguably until he died.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Arguably until he died, right.

INTERVIEWER: Just from a personal perspective, when you look back on the year 1978, how does that—if you look back at a long career and life, you've done many things, how does that fit into the bigger picture of your life? I mean, is it something that you—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Well, to tell you the truth, I mean, 1978, as a year, in my mind's eye, in terms of my own career, was the most exhilarating year of my career. It was a time where options were many and solutions were doable. You had—the great thing in my mind, in my view, Marion Barry was an effective leader because he recognized talent and knew a good idea when he saw one. You know? So when someone like an Anne Witt or then called—her name then was Anne Howee [ph], came in with a Supercan, you know, he—and she showed him what it would be and how it would be deployed and, you know, I mean, he saw that idea and he said, that's—"What do you need?" You know? That to me is the mark of a leader, you know, as opposed to, you know, the notion of a leader being—not to cast aspersions on Donald Trump, but the leader being the guy who wants to build a great wall.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You know what I mean? Leadership to me is all about surround yourself with capable people, support the talent, and recognize good ideas, and that's Marion Barry.

INTERVIEWER: Have you been involved in other campaigns since then outside of the District government, D.C.?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: No, no. You know, after that, I pretty much went into government, I did some private sector stuff, but, you know, I did like a lot of us do, you know, you have responsibilities, you have a family, you have children, you've got a mortgage, a car note. You know what I mean?

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You've got to—

INTERVIEWER: You don't have time to work on home rule.

[Laughter.]

JOSE GUTIERREZ: You don't have time to work on home rule, you've got to work on—you know, pay that tuition.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Okay. Is there anything else you would like to say? Any other observations? Anything we missed—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: All I can say is, look, you know, this town was fortunate to have at that time, early on, some of the brighter minds of the student movement, particularly the minority student movement, and in a lot of ways, the first Barry administration was SNCC 2.0.

INTERVIEWER: Mmm. Yeah, yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: So this town benefited from all of that.

INTERVIEWER: Based on your experience in New York as a college student and as an activist, Latino activist, and here, were there tensions between the African American and the Latino community or—

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Early on, no. Early on, it was all about, you know, coalition.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Unfortunately, now you get some tension because there's a view on the part of some that Latino immigrants are taking jobs from, which is not true. You know, but you have that impression or that sense or—and I run into that a lot now at my age in this town when I'm back and I'm dealing with contractors and government people, but I think, you know, that's more a result of the recession that we've gone through and the economic times, and it's also a reflection of politicians like the Donald Trumps of the world, who appeal to the worst in us, as opposed to a politician like a Marion Barry, that appeals to the best in the sense of we can all work together, you know, you, I, white, black, Latino, you know, we can all work together as part of this rainbow to make it a better place. So, you know, frankly, I miss those politicians. I miss the politicians that were about inclusiveness because what we have today is all about fear mongering, it's all about hate this group or hate that group or, you know, your problems are not your problems, they were really caused by this other group, and, you know, my God is different than your God, you know. I mean, at the end of the day, if you follow that path, it's crazy, right? It's just all wild, crazy stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay?

JOSE GUTIERREZ: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.